

Families of HMM-261 (REIN) Raging Bulls:

As we continue our deployment, I want to provide you all with a quick update on the deployment activities of the Raging Bulls of HMM-261 (REIN).

HMM-261 (REIN) COMPLETES SQUADRON SUSTAINMENT TRAINING...

As of today, the Raging Bulls of HMM-261 (REIN) have returned to the Kearsarge Expeditionary Strike Group having successfully completed over a month of training with the 22d MEU while deployed to Udairi Army Airfield at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The past week in particular has been extremely busy as the Marines and Sailors "turned to" fixing aircraft, palletizing gear, washing equipment, and flying aircraft as part of the Squadron's return to the USS Kearsarge. When all said and done, the diligent efforts of all ensured that the end result was an efficient and safe return of all our Squadron personnel and equipment to the USS Kearsarge.

In reflecting on the work that was done at Udairi, I am extremely proud of the Squadron's performance as we accomplished all of our training objectives, and then some. While in Kuwait, the results of our aviation training included advanced flight designations for many of our pilots and aircrew, aerial gunnery qualifications, and the completion of several instructor designations. In addition to the flight designations, the Squadron also conducted a wide range of ground training, to include Marine Corps Martial Arts, Combat Marksmanship Training, HMMWV Egress Assistance Training, and Medical Simulation Training. Throughout the course of our stay in Udairi, a day didn't pass that the Squadron wasn't actively engaged in some sort of training or aviation support role.

In addition to the training that was conducted, the Squadron was also able to provide dedicated missions in support Operation Iraqi Freedom. First, our AV-8B detachment of Marines and Sailors that remained aboard the USS Kearsarge during this period did a phenomenal job of providing fixed wing combat sorties to forces ashore in Iraq, both day and night. Over several weeks, the AV-8B pilots flew countless hours in support of the ground forces throughout Iraq. In making this happen, the small detachment of AV-8B maintenance Marines aboard USS Kearsarge were instrumental in ensuring that each aircraft was ready for any assigned mission. While operations were being conducted at sea, the Squadron's helicopters ashore at Udairi Army Airfield also contributed to the cause in their own way. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the helicopter pilots, along with the assistance of the Squadron's Marine Air Controller Group detachment, planned and executed a flawless troop lift of soldiers and airman out of Iraq over 3 days. This lift, along with the operations conducted by the AV-8B's, reflected the Squadron's unquestionable commitment in supporting our fellow countrymen, in any service, when a need arises. As always, the Squadron remains ready at all times, and that is a direct reflection of each Marine's and Sailor's commitment to mission accomplishment.

Whether conducting training or combat operations, there are Marines and Sailors in HMM-261 (REIN) that do not regularly get the attention that is certainly due them. From the Marines of the MALS 26 and 14 detachments who worked endless hours tracking down parts and fixing our aircraft afloat or ashore, to the MWSS 274 Bulk Fuelers who kept our planes "topped off" and the Cooks who prepared our meals and the manpower for many of the "undesirable" but essential duties...all have done their part, and done it well! And not to be forgotten, our "Raging Bull Docs", who tended to our injuries and illnesses, keeping their fellow Squadron mates healthy. Their contributions were likewise critical to the overall success of the Squadron. Rightfully so, families and friends back home should be proud of their Marine's or Sailor's commitment to this Squadron, our Corps and this Country! And now that all the personnel, equipment and aircraft are back together, embarked aboard the USS Kearsarge, the Squadron is looking forward to a short break in the action, and some well earned rest!

KEEPING YOU INFORMED...

If you should have any concerns, questions, or just need some moral support during our deployment, I encourage you to contact your Key Volunteer, Family Readiness Staff Non-commissioned Officer, our family hotline, or this website (www.22meu.usmc.mil) to obtain up-to-date information you need to stay in touch. Please keep in mind that official and factual information regarding the Squadron's movements, activities, and operations will come solely from the 22d MEU (SOC) Commanding Officer through me. ***Information sourced from me will only be delivered through the channels mentioned previously.***

As always, I along with your Raging Bulls sincerely appreciate the prayers and support we continue to receive from back home!

Rage On!

James G. Flynn
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